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Defense Dept. officials again last week denied press reports that the U.S. early warning satellite in geosynchronous orbit over the Indian Ocean had been "blinded" by strong infrared radiation a year ago and that two U.S. reconnaissance satellites had been damaged or destroyed earlier this year. The strong infrared sources, 10-100 times the intensity of an intercontinental ballistic missile rocket plume, prompted Defense Dept. concern last December that the USSR might be using high-power ground-based lasers to interfere with the early warning satellite (AW&ST Dec. 8, 1975, p. 12).

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Following an AVIATION WEEK & SPACE TECHNOLOGY article on the incidents, the issue was raised during House Armed Services committee hearings on Dec. 15, and the Defense Dept. later submitted a response to be inserted in the record. The statement said in part: "Analysis of these events essentially eliminates initial concerns that lasers were being used against the satellite system. Instead the events are believed to have occurred as a result of several large fires along Soviet natural-gas pipelines [AW&ST Jan. 5, p. 18]. These events were local in nature and did not reduce the satellite system's ability to provide an early warning of ballistic missile launches." But the statement added: "Our investigation is still continuing." A Defense official now says that the investigation has been terminated.

